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Chairperson: Ms. Intelmann ..... (Estonia)
later: Mr. Fonseca (Vice-Chairperson) ..... (Brazil)
later: Ms. Intelmann (Chairperson) ..... (Estonia)

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06-58451 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 55: Globalization and interdependence (*continued*) (A/61/486)

(e) Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy (*continued*) (A/61/269, A/61/93, A/61/126, A/61/181 and A/C.2/61/L.11*)

Draft resolution on integration of the economies in transition into the world economy

1. **Mr. Rachkov** (Belarus), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.11*, noted that the unprecedented systemic transformation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States was still under way, some 14 years after the General Assembly had adopted its first resolution on the integration of economies in transition into the world economy. Some countries had achieved significant progress and were even emerging as donors, but many of them still faced socio-economic difficulties. Some small transition countries had even experienced a decline in economic and social indicators related to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

2. International assistance to transition countries should remain an important element of international cooperation for development and a topical issue on the United Nations agenda. Accordingly, paragraphs 6 to 9 of the draft resolution sought to strengthen international cooperation, particularly for infrastructure development; promote fair conditions of international trade and facilitate membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) for transition countries; and ensure that the interests of such countries were taken into account in the process of reforming the international financial architecture. Assistance to enable countries to complete the transition would make an important contribution to the global development process.

Agenda item 53: Sustainable development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/61/258, A/61/93, A/61/126 and A/C.2/61/4)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/61/268, A/61/277, A/61/72-E/2006/54, A/61/75-E/2006/49, A/61/76-E/2006/51 and A/61/181)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (*continued*) (A/61/229, A/61/229/Corr.1 and A/C.2/61/CRP.1)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (*continued*) (A/61/225)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/61/225)

(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its ninth special session (*continued*) (A/61/25 and A/61/322)

3. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on implementation of the Mauritius Strategy (A/61/277) and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/229), outlined the efforts made by his Office, to enhance its role of advocacy and mobilization of support for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Those efforts included highlighting small island developing State issues in meetings of international bodies at the global and regional levels and mobilization of civil society support through joint activities with NGOs. The Office had also continued to underscore the need to put the most vulnerable countries at the core of South-South cooperation, particularly through triangular arrangements. It was collaborating closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Unit for South-South Cooperation for that purpose. One recent example was the financial support provided by the Special Unit for a technical study on enhancing information and communication technology (ICT) connectivity in the Pacific small island developing States. Another priority area of work for the Office had been its close collaboration with UNDP aimed at establishing a physical presence of the United

Nations in each of the small island developing States in the Pacific.

4. Following the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Office had identified five areas for special attention and follow-up action: disaster risk insurance, Global Environment Facility funding, disaster reduction and post-disaster assistance, ICT connectivity and the role of regional organizations of small island developing States. With regard to the first area, at the World Bank Small States Forum in 2005, the Office had highlighted the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy and encouraged active consideration of the proposal to establish a small States catastrophe risk insurance facility, advising that the World Bank/International Monetary Fund should become the lead agency to oversee its establishment. More recently, the Office had been working to facilitate access to funds available to small island developing States from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) administered by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). A special event being organized by the Office and OCHA in October 2006 would provide information on accessing those funds in the aftermath of natural disasters.

5. The Office was working with the World Tourism Organization to promote sustainable tourism — which featured prominently in the Mauritius Strategy — in small island developing States. In the area of ICT connectivity, the Office had been actively pursuing the possibility of establishing a dedicated satellite communications infrastructure for Pacific island countries through a joint project with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. A study of the technical, economic and commercial viability of that undertaking was currently under way.

6. His Office continued to stress the need for involvement of regional intergovernmental organizations in implementation of the Strategy, as well as the importance of engaging them more constructively in monitoring the implementation process. Monitoring should be not simply an exercise in stocktaking, but a proactive, dynamic and substantive process. The Office was also working to ensure better coordination and monitoring of United Nations activities in relation to the Mauritius Strategy through the organization of periodic meetings of the various funds, programmes and agencies involved.

7. With regard to disaster reduction, the Office had taken full advantage of the opportunity afforded by the Kobe World Conference on Disaster Reduction to highlight the extreme vulnerability of small island developing States to natural disasters, and was encouraged by the special attention given to such States under the priorities for action in the Hyogo Framework for Action. The Office was supporting the efforts of small island developing States to implement the Hyogo Framework. He urged all such States to designate their national focal points for implementation, follow-up and monitoring of progress on the Framework. The report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/61/229) could serve as a guideline for action in that regard. At the regional level, cooperation among small island developing States on disaster reduction was progressing. The Pacific island States had endorsed the Madang Framework for Action 2005-2015 and a regional database was being established. Member States of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States were implementing a regional disaster reduction programme.

8. He expressed appreciation to the Alliance of Small Island States for its global leadership in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The strong and continued political support of the members of the Alliance for the work of the United Nations system in relation to small island developing States was needed in order to have a positive impact in the international community, especially among development partners, United Nations organizations, international financial organizations, and regional and subregional organizations, as well as civil society and the private sector.

9. **The Chairperson** invited the Committee to resume the general discussion on the item.

10. **Mr. Nikitov** (Ukraine), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM), said that sustainable development was a key element for achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The GUAM States had therefore welcomed the agreements of the 2005 World Summit on a number of sustainable development

issues, including water and sanitation, climate change, biodiversity, technology transfer and capacity-building at all levels. They also remained committed to the full and timely implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. All four countries had adopted national programmes and strategies based on the Johannesburg Plan and on Agenda 21, which provided a blueprint for building national consensus around sustainable development and promoting economic growth, social development and a healthy environment. Their implementation was subject to regular monitoring, the results of which were disclosed to the public as means of raising awareness of sustainable development issues.

11. The GUAM States believed that sustainable development was an indispensable part of the work of the United Nations system and recognized the need for strengthened environmental governance, including the governance mechanisms of the United Nations Environment Programme. They also valued the ongoing efforts aimed at strengthening coordination within the United Nations system and attached paramount importance to the leadership of the United Nations in support of the Hyogo Framework for Action. The balanced design of the programme of work for the fifteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, should lead to the adoption of practical policy decisions. Support for research and development, transfer of environmentally friendly technologies to developing countries on concessionary terms and capacity-building should be cross-cutting themes of those decisions.

12. **Ms. Laohaphan** (Thailand) noted from the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21 (A/61/258) that many Governments had made sustainable development their core principle in charting the future course of their countries. Her delegation was also pleased to see from the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (A/61/25) that UNEP was emphasizing the promotion of energy efficiency, as energy security and fossil-fuel pollution would be among the main issues to be tackled during the twenty-first century.

13. Despite recent political events in her country, Thai international trade and investment policies remained the same, their ultimate aim being to generate sustainable economic growth. Thailand continued to be committed to multilateral trade negotiations and free trade agreements. The business environment remained stable and the economy was expected to show robust growth of 4.5 per cent in the last quarter of 2006.

14. Sustainable development with an emphasis on human and social development had long been an integral part of her country's National Economic and Social Development Plan, which embraced the sufficiency economy philosophy. That philosophy had led to sustainable agriculture practices which ensured food security for small-scale farmers even in times of agricultural price slumps. It also inspired more prudent financial practices, which would help to prevent the occurrence of an Asian financial crisis such as had occurred in 1997.

15. Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to global environment protection. It was a non-Annex I party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, and was in the process of implementing the clean development mechanism (CDM), including the development of CDM projects aimed at transforming biological and agriculture waste into energy. The country had also launched a campaign to promote public awareness of low-carbon activities at all levels, which included capacity-building programmes for communities and municipal leaders to enable them to tackle national concerns relating to energy efficiency, imported fuel supply and high fuel prices, and climate change. Thailand urged developed (Annex I) countries to assist developing countries by developing affordable technologies for renewable energy and alternative energy. Her Government also called on the United Nations organizations, particularly UNEP, to continue their role of capacity-building aimed at enhancing developing countries' ability to make use of clean energy, especially biofuel.

16. A particular environmental concern for her country was deterioration of ecosystems and fluctuation of water levels in the Mekong River Basin as a result of unsustainable use of natural resources. Thailand called on all stakeholders to cooperate in promoting the sustainable development and conservation of that area.

17. With regard to disaster preparedness and response, Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action. After the Asian tsunami in 2004, the Thai Government had set up a nationwide system of tsunami early warning centres. It had also contributed substantial seed funding

to the ESCAP Voluntary Trust Fund for the establishment of a regional tsunami early warning system. Thailand had dispatched relief assistance to countries affected by catastrophic disaster, such as the recent earthquakes in the region. It had supported the launch of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional standby arrangements for disaster relief and emergency response.

18. **Mr. Al-Manaseer** (Bahrain) said that there had been numerous international discussions, conferences, declarations and resolutions on sustainable development over the years. The main challenge faced by developing countries was the need for more financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building. Both North-South and South-South cooperation were necessary to implement the three economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. His country was trying to diversify its sources of income, while taking into account environmental concerns. Bahrain's Constitution provided for the welfare and freedom of its citizens based on gender equality and democracy, and its achievements had occupied a prominent place in United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Human Development Reports*.

19. **Mr. Ghandi** (India) said that India had a long-standing commitment to environmental protection. It had taken part in all the major environmental conferences and had participated in shaping international agreements to tackle global environmental issues. His Government was privileged to be hosting the Eighteenth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer; India's national environmental policy recognized that human beings were at the centre of sustainable development and that the right to development must equitably meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations. To that end, it sought to ensure that people benefited more from conservation than from resource degradation.

20. If developing countries were to attain the goals and targets of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the international community must make the means of implementation available and create an international environment supportive of development. Intellectual property rights and trade regimes, together with the conditionalities imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, were eroding the autonomy and flexibility of developing countries, hindering their ability to develop policies and strategies for economic growth and sustainable development. The current impasse in the Doha Round was a cause for concern. Developing countries had clearly been given to understand that trade-distorting agricultural subsidies would be phased out within a definite time frame, but the benefits of agricultural reform continued to elude them. Moreover, reducing agricultural tariffs and subsidies was not enough; there must be exceptions to allow developing countries to pursue their pro-development strategies and policies aimed at protecting their poor. Special and differential treatment for developing countries remained a categorical imperative.

21. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation recognized that good governance at the international level was fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development, and it emphasized the need to address international finance, trade, technology and investment patterns that impacted the development prospects of developing countries. The Secretary-General should be asked to prepare a report on that topic, including a detailed analysis of actions taken at the international level, for consideration at future sessions.

22. The thematic cluster of issues for the current implementation cycle of the multi-year work programme of the Commission on Sustainable Development, namely, energy, climate change and industrial development, including air pollution, were particularly relevant. In developing countries, a rapid increase in energy use per capita would be essential to realizing national development goals and the Millennium Development Goals. Developing countries must have the policy space to address their energy needs in the light of their individual circumstances. In particular, there needed to be a fresh assessment of nuclear energy as a clean and safe source of energy. Research and development were also needed to make modern renewable energy sources and energy-efficient technologies available to developing countries at affordable prices. Critical energy technologies remained beyond the reach of developing countries because of prohibitive costs under existing intellectual property rights regimes. Those regimes should be revisited with a view to making such technologies accessible to developing countries. The international community should also explore the possibility of establishing a clean technology acquisition fund for that purpose.

23. India recognized the importance of conservation, protection and sustainable use of genetic resources and

traditional knowledge, as well as equitable sharing of the benefits from their use, particularly for developing countries. His delegation endorsed the recommendation made in the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/225) that every effort should be made to conclude the negotiations for an international regime on access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing by 2010.

24. The report on Mauritius Strategy implementation (A/61/277) demonstrated that small island developing States needed long-term attention in the areas of capacity-building and resource transfer. In the spirit of South-South solidarity, India was cooperating with such States in the areas of natural disaster preparedness and mitigation, resilience and capacity-building, and climate change. Its contribution, however, was intended to supplement the efforts of the international donor community, which must fulfil its commitments.

25. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) recalled that 2005 had been a year of tragedy, with a total of 360 disasters of varying kinds that had killed more than 90,000 people. Because of changing socio-economic conditions, rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, coastal land use and climatic risks, the number of disasters would continue to rise, along with their economic and social costs. That menace needed to be addressed expeditiously and appropriately.

26. Global warming was a major issue confronting humanity. If the current trend continued, the sea level worldwide would rise by another 10 inches by the end of the century. Millions of people on low-lying lands and islands in the Asia-Pacific region would become forced migrants or refugees. The consequences would be disproportionately shared by the least developed countries and other small and vulnerable economies that bore the exorbitant cost of damages perpetrated by others. The international community should undertake the necessary preventive and precautionary measures to avert that scourge.

27. Recent advances in science and technology had created enormous potential for developing an efficient system of disaster risk reduction and management. It was possible to track atmospheric depression and predict local weather conditions with a reasonable degree of accuracy, and thus to issue early warnings to people living in vulnerable areas. Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, including national platforms for disaster reduction, was crucial, as was cooperation among countries at regional and global levels for disaster risk reduction. Regional and global early warning systems were essential in order to build resilience to natural disasters. For developing and least developed countries, international support would be critical.

28. South Asia was vulnerable to natural disasters; between 2 and 16 per cent of the GDP of South Asian countries was lost every year due to natural calamities. The new Disaster Management Centre of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation would collect and disseminate data, indigenous knowledge and good practices, providing policy advice and facilitating capacity-building.

29. Bangladesh was a disaster-prone country, but the Government was committed to reducing its people's vulnerability to a manageable humanitarian level. Its Ministry of Food and Disaster Management dealt not only with disaster preparedness but also with rehabilitation and reconstruction. The Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme was a road map for the development of internal strategic plans for different government functions. Bangladesh was one of the first countries to institute such a national platform to guide risk reduction efforts, and thus brought a paradigm shift in disaster management, from the conventional response and relief approach to a more comprehensive risk reduction culture.

30. The policies and programmes undertaken by Bangladesh had proved effective. For example, a cyclone in November 1970 had caused 300,000 deaths, while the death toll of a comparable cyclone in September 1997 had been 11. Bangladesh was ready to share its experiences and best practices with countries in similar situations. As building global partnerships and collaboration would be imperative, it was to be hoped that the international solidarity forged in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami would continue.

31. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (China) said China agreed with the Secretary-General that sustainable development could be truly described as a global undertaking, embraced and implemented by stakeholders across the world. The developing countries in particular had taken unprecedented steps by integrating sustainable development into their national development strategies, accelerating reforms, mobilizing all social forces, and building extensive partnerships.

32. However, the situation of global sustainable development was still rather grim. Environmental

degradation, ecological damage, land deterioration, persistent poverty and infectious diseases still existed. The uneven economic development among States, and among different regions of individual countries, had become more marked. The economic vulnerability of the least developed countries was worsening, environmental pressure was heavier, and the achievement of sustainable development remained a long-term and arduous task.

33. Two essential areas needed improvement. Firstly, national Governments needed to act in accordance with their countries' level of development, formulating their own sustainable development strategies. At the same time, economic, legal and administrative measures had to be applied comprehensively to enhance implementation. Developing countries were faced with enormous pressure and difficulties, but for the benefit of future generations they needed to adopt innovative measures, and mobilize national resources and forces to achieve sustained economic growth.

34. Secondly, it was necessary to build global partnerships and strengthen international cooperation. Achieving sustainable development demanded a breadth of actions without precedent, while countries' level of development, capacity for governance, and financial and technical situation varied widely. Conventional concepts could no longer meet current needs. Both Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation therefore contained explicit provisions to the effect that developing countries should receive financial assistance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies on preferential terms. If the global process of sustainable development was to succeed, the developed countries needed to make good on their pledges.

35. China had acted with determination in fulfilling its commitments to sustainable development. While maintaining fairly rapid economic growth, it had made unremitting efforts to adjust its industrial structure, improve energy efficiency and protect the environment, with a view to accelerating the creation of an energy-saving and environmentally sound society. Under the current five-year plan, by 2010, while per capita GDP would be twice that of 2000, energy consumption per unit of GDP would be 20 per cent lower than at the end of 2005. It would require arduous efforts to achieve those objectives: China would try its utmost and hoped to receive strong support from the international community.

36. The development of small island developing States was an important part of global sustainable development. Consequently, the international community should fulfil its financial commitment to them and accelerate technology transfer, especially of technologies for developing and using cost-effective and substitute forms of energy. It was also essential to promote capacity-building for small island developing States, especially in such areas as improving energy efficiency, evaluating vulnerability and formulating strategies for adaptation to climate change. In order to address the fundamental fears of small island developing States, practical measures should be adopted to help them better respond to the disastrous consequences of sea level rise and extreme weather events.

37. In the age of globalization, international and regional cooperation was essential for warding off and responding to natural disasters. It was therefore necessary to work in four specific areas. Firstly, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 should be conscientiously implemented. Secondly, regional cooperation mechanisms for disaster monitoring should be constructed. Thirdly, the exchange and sharing of disaster reduction information and experience should be enhanced. Fourthly, support should be increased to assist developing countries with capacity-building. With a view to providing such assistance, the Chinese Government was currently working hard on the establishment of the Asian Regional Research Centre on Catastrophe.

38. The international community must comprehensively implement the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol and encourage a harmonious conclusion of the talks on post-2012 greenhouse emissions reduction targets. China called on the developed countries concerned to face up squarely to their historical responsibility for the current high emission levels, to pledge to take further emission reduction measures after 2012 and to strengthen technical cooperation with and transfer of technology to developing countries.

39. China supported the efforts to strengthen UNEP and improve its efficiency and authority. The relevant measures should promote coordinated development of national economic, social and environmental protection, and in particular meet the special needs of developing countries, so as to improve their overall capacity to deal with environment-related issues.

40. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that disaster mitigation must take into account the parameters of sustainable development, in order to integrate the actions taken to protect the population on the one hand with the goals of economic and social development and comprehensive environmental management on the other. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was thus an important framework to support the efforts of national bodies. Colombia also supported the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, stressing the importance of strengthening coordination and cooperation among the different actors participating in the early warning systems, and adequately integrating their activities and knowledge, in accordance with the agreements reached at the second World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

41. Using its National System for the Prevention of and Reaction to Disasters, Colombia had been able to make progress in risk management, community training and development of early warning systems and in general reduce the vulnerability of the population to natural disasters. The Climate Change Office in the Ministry of the Environment, Housing and Territorial Development gave advice on the viability of projects framed to deal with climate change. To date, seven complete projects had been submitted, while others were in the drafting stage. They related primarily to hydroelectric and wind energy, or to management of forests.

42. The Colombian Forester Families Programme to combat the felling of tropical forests and the Amazon jungle provided for a Government subsidy that had allowed 43,000 families to replace illicit crops by alternative crops. Technical assistance provided had made it possible to adopt collective solutions to environmental issues such as watershed recovery and pollution control, with actions supported by the sustainable use of natural resources.

43. As one of the countries recognized as megadiverse by UNEP, Colombia considered it important to examine the link between climate change and loss of biodiversity, a phenomenon that jeopardized the future welfare of humanity. The United Nations must identify and diagnose the consequences of climate change on life in its different manifestations. When they understood all the dimensions of climate change, the nations of the world could resolve to undertake, without delay, effective actions to confront a phenomenon that generated disasters, increased development vulnerability and created risks for the sustainability of societies.

44. *Mr. Fonseca (Brazil), Vice-Chairperson, took the Chair.*

45. **Mr. Snowden** (United States of America) said that the Commission on Sustainable Development had redefined itself as a body focused on translating the words negotiated in forums such as the present meeting into actions and results on the ground. The Commission's successes since the 2002 World Summit had demonstrated its unique added value in the collective efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. By establishing clearly focused cycles, first on water and now on energy, the Commission had galvanized action in a wide range of organizations around the globe, effectively integrating the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable development. It had also had a catalyzing effect, by endorsing sustainable development partnerships. Those partnerships and initiatives were starting to deliver concrete results. For example, with the assistance of the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles and the World Bank, all 49 sub-Saharan African countries had stopped refining and importing leaded gasoline by the end of 2005. The Commission's Learning Centre had provided on-site capacity-building courses to more than 1,500 participants over the past three years. Its Partnerships Fair had provided space for action-oriented, multi-stakeholder discussions on more than 100 partnerships.

46. The Commission was also collecting and disseminating lessons learned and best practices. Its sessions and its Matrix had created new opportunities for exchanging practical solutions to sustainable development challenges, through excellent Web-based tools designed to disseminate information in a user-friendly manner. But there was still more progress to be made. His delegation hoped that the Commission would continue to devote its meeting time and resources to translating countries' sustainable development blueprints into on-the-ground results.

47. In the past year, international environmental governance had been under discussion in at least two forums — the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence and the General Assembly's Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the UN's Environmental Activities. Judging from the work of those groups, there was a

diversity of opinions on what constituted improvements to international environmental governance.

48. While the United States supported incorporating environmental concerns into development work, it agreed with other Governments that no new environment institution was needed. Major structural changes would lead to a divisive and time-consuming debate, distracting the United Nations from making valuable progress in areas where a clear consensus existed. A package of measures had been adopted by UNEP some years previously, aimed at improving coordination, efficiency and funding. Recently, some very positive developments had been seen within UNEP, such as the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building. Those new policies should be given the time and opportunity to succeed. The existing system of multilateral environmental agreements reflected a good balance of coordination and decentralization. A supranational authority must not interfere with the good work of those agreements by exercising control over them or adding additional bureaucratic layers, as the principal responsibility for environmental governance must lie with national Governments.

49. **Mr. Aisi** (Papua New Guinea) said that the international community had progressed from the broad statements of principles and commitments in Agenda 21 to the more focused goals of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals.

50. Although countries needed to take responsibility for implementing the sustainable development commitments, they also required the support of development partners, including the United Nations, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders. Papua New Guinea welcomed the assistance of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and Italy in developing National Sustainable Development Strategies for Pacific Island countries.

51. At its fourteenth session, the Commission on Sustainable Development had identified the obstacles in the way of achieving sustainable development and had highlighted the importance of renewable energy and the need to promote alternative fuel sources. For their part, the Pacific Island countries had taken advantage of the session to gather information from the various experts on the availability of affordable and environmentally-friendly technologies.

52. The review of the Mauritius Strategy should cover: actions taken to date to implement paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 60/194 regarding manpower capacity constraints in the Small Island Developing States Unit; actions to fulfil the commitments made at the Mauritius International Meeting; and the development of a mechanism that would identify affordable renewable energy sources and other technologies that small island developing States could use to address their development challenges. An effective link between the United Nations system and regional and national mechanisms was vital for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. In that regard, Papua New Guinea was concerned that the United Nations system appeared to be focusing more on monitoring the implementation of the Strategy than on actual implementation.

53. As a high-risk country, Papua New Guinea needed to develop national policies and institutions to deal with disaster-related issues. It therefore welcomed the support of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, UNDP and other development partners.

54. Climate change was an even more serious issue. Every effort should be made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and stabilize their concentration in the atmosphere at a level that prevented dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system. Papua New Guinea looked forward to receiving assistance from the Global Environment Facility and other agencies in protecting its rich terrestrial and marine biodiversity resources.

55. *Ms. Intelmann (Estonia) resumed the Chair.*

56. **Mr. Mubin** (Malaysia) said he was pleased to note from the Secretary-General's report (A/61/258) that progress had been made towards achieving sustainable development over recent years, and welcomed the report's recommendations that Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups should deepen their commitment to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The Commission on Sustainable Development should continue to function as the high-level body on sustainable development within the United Nations system. Malaysia wished to reaffirm its commitment to achieving the targets set in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and Agenda 21, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. It continued to take

appropriate measures to ensure that its development was sustainable and balanced.

57. With regard to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, he said that most developing countries lacked the capacity and the financial resources to minimize the impact of disasters on the local population. Malaysia therefore urged the relevant United Nations organizations to work in a more coordinated fashion with Member States in order to ensure that international engagement in disaster reduction was sustained over the long term. United Nations agencies should cooperate closely with Malaysia and other countries in the region to develop improved early warning capacities. Furthermore, the existing bureaucratic procedures, policy frameworks and Government-to-Government aid mechanisms were inadequate.

58. The many natural disasters witnessed in recent years clearly indicated the need to pay serious attention to climate change and to global warming in particular. The international community must find the collective political will to implement agreed commitments effectively. Malaysia therefore urged annex I countries to transfer their climate-friendly technologies to the non-annex I countries as part of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. If annex-I countries took more concrete and positive measures, the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol would be achieved more rapidly.

59. International cooperation was essential to assist countries to explore fully the potential of their biologically diverse resources. Access to, and the transfer of relevant technology and expertise, especially from developed partners, was also essential. Malaysia was also concerned about bio-piracy, since a large share of the world's biodiversity was found in developing countries. In order to maintain the integrity of the world's ecosystems, an equitable solution should be found jointly by countries with abundant biodiversity resources and countries with the necessary resources, scientific knowledge and technological expertise. Malaysia was also mindful of the need to ensure the involvement and participation of all members of society, especially local communities.

60. **Mr. Tarragô** (Brazil) said that his country had been an active participant in the World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg and the annual sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It looked forward to concrete progress in the treatment of the cluster of themes at the Commission's fifteenth session, namely climate change, air pollution/atmosphere, industrial development and energy for sustainable development.

61. With respect to climate change in particular, it was difficult for the international community to agree on collective action owing to uncertainty, market imperfections and weak representation of those most affected by the problem. It was essential, however, that the developing countries should gain access to cleaner, low-emission and cost-effective technologies through innovative mechanisms and expansion of South-South cooperation.

62. The replacement of fossil fuels by biofuels represented the most effective and cost-efficient way to mitigate the greenhouse effect. Brazil was the world's largest producer of ethanol made from sugar cane, and ethanol currently accounted for more than 40 per cent of its fuel consumption for transportation.

63. Brazil supported the resolution being put forward by the Association of Caribbean States which recognized the Caribbean Sea as a special area in the context of sustainable development. It was also in favour of strengthening international cooperation to help the most vulnerable countries, especially small island developing countries and those suffering from desertification, to combat environmental threats.

64. Brazil was implementing an integrated sustainable forest management policy that promoted the value of the native forest and supported the socio-economic development of the neighbouring communities. Significant reductions in deforestation rates had been achieved and the Government remained committed to achieving a permanent decrease in deforestation.

65. In the spirit of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Brazil believed that the world's industrial core should create incentives for the developing world to invest in new technologies with low carbon emissions. The industrialized nations needed to provide significant amounts of assistance and affordable access to technology to help the developing countries meet the challenging tasks of industrialization and urbanization.

66. At the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, it

had been decided to submit for consideration by the General Assembly a draft resolution proclaiming 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity. Brazil looked forward to the adoption of the draft resolution under item 53 (f) of the agenda.

67. **Mr. Amil** (Pakistan) pointed out that the danger to the planet's environment was currently far greater than it had been in 1992, when Agenda 21 had been adopted. The process of globalization had accentuated economic asymmetries, so that an increasing number of people lived precariously balanced on the edge of subsistence.

68. In 2005, the world's political leaders had committed themselves at the World Summit collectively to fight poverty and under-development. Unfortunately, the development consensus was not sufficiently ambitious, and there had been little progress in implementation of the agreed commitments reflected in the Millennium Development Goals.

69. Pakistan was committed to the promotion of rapid and equitable development for the welfare of its people and had integrated the goals of sustainable development into its policies. Its National Environment Policy dealt with: conservation and efficient management of environmental resources; integration of environmental considerations into policy-making; and creation of mass awareness and community mobilization for environmental protection and sustainability. Pakistan was also preparing a National Sustainable Development Strategy, which would aim at simultaneous growth and protection of the environment.

70. Pakistan supported the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report in document A/61/258, calling on donor Governments and international financial institutions to support developing countries' efforts to overcome barriers and constraints identified during the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

71. Pakistan had been a consistent promoter of compressed natural gas (CNG) as fuel for transport and was the third largest user of CNG in the world. In line with the recommendation of the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, it would continue its efforts and planned to increase the number of vehicles using CNG fuel from the current number of 280,000 to at least 800,000 by 2015.

72. The world was witnessing a significant increase in the magnitude and intensity of natural disasters. The earthquake in Pakistan in 2005, and the Indian Ocean tsunami at the end of 2004 were just two recent examples, which together had killed more than 353,000 people. However, important steps had also been taken in 2005 in the area of disaster preparedness and risk reduction, including the establishment of a consortium of International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system partners, at the Third International Conference on Early Warning. For its part, Pakistan had established a National Disaster Management Agency.

73. Climate change was resulting in glacier melting, floods, mudslides and rising sea levels. Increased international technological and financial cooperation was imperative for the protection of the environment. Pakistan was in favour of strengthening UNEP, as the lead United Nations agency responsible for spearheading such efforts. Observing that the UNEP Secretariat was being reorganized, Pakistan hoped that the principles of transparency and equitable geographical representation would be followed in making fresh appointments at all locations and at all levels.

74. Little progress had been made in implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building. Its immediate and full implementation was essential for efforts aimed at sustained economic growth and poverty eradication. Pakistan also wished to stress the importance of a timely and sustainable fourth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility.

75. In promoting the goals of sustainable development, the highest priority for developing countries was the elimination of poverty. No resources should be diverted from that goal. There was a need for adequate resources to be devoted to environmental protection in accordance with the principles of the Rio Conference on Environment and Development and Agenda 21, in addition to those committed to promoting development goals. Developing countries must be assisted to build the capacity for sustainable development, with urgent measures to permit them to acquire the relevant technology. Finally, the main responsibility for environmental degradation rested on those who consumed most and polluted most. The "polluter pays" principle must be respected.

76. **Mr. Mansour** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Millennium Development Goals Report 2006 noted the alarming fact that more people were going hungry

despite the decline in poverty. The global partnership for development needed to be strengthened if the Millennium Development Goals were to be achieved and the Governments of the developing countries needed to adopt appropriate national policies to change their structures and upgrade technologies.

77. The Iranian Government supported the Secretary-General's proposal for a Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction as well as his recommendations on strengthening the Strategy system. There should be more practical steps to reduce risks through research activities and technology transfers and more reliable financial resources to support the implementation of the Strategy, including through the regular United Nations budget. In order to promote international cooperation, oral and written reports needed to address all types of natural disasters, including those with geological causes.

78. The Iranian Government reaffirmed the important role of UNEP in the achievement of environmental sustainability and stressed the need to implement the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building as well as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management adopted by the UNEP Governing Council. It welcomed the successful fourth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility but expressed concern that some major donors had reduced their contribution levels. Larger contributions would be needed to implement the numerous projects in the pipeline and to achieve Millennium Development Goal 7 by 2015.

79. **Ms. Yang** (Palau) said that the Mauritius Strategy provided an opportunity for the people of Palau to define their sustainable development goals. It proposed concrete initiatives which could be used to focus donor contributions and encourage the mainstreaming of the interests of small island States into the work of the United Nations and other international agencies.

80. Her delegation was pleased to note the prominent place given in the Strategy to tourism and biodiversity, which for Palau were inextricably linked. Tourism was an essential contributor to its economy, but depended on the beauty of its oceans, which in turn provided food not only for domestic consumption but also for export. Palau was committed to the promotion of biodiversity and called on other nations to make it a priority. Together with the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau had created the Micronesia Challenge: each country had agreed to set aside 30 per cent of its near-shore marine resources and 20 per cent of its land for conservation by 2010. In order to achieve its goals, however, Palau would require both funding and expertise.

81. The preservation of biodiversity did not end at the edge of each island's exclusive economic zone. The 14 nations of the Pacific Islands Forum were united in their call for an interim prohibition on destructive fishing practices, including deep-sea bottom trawling, in unregulated areas beyond national jurisdiction. Palau urged all responsible nations to echo its call for a prohibition on bottom trawling in areas where effective conservation and management measures were not yet in place to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems.

82. Because of the Mauritius Strategy's overemphasis on regionalism, the needs of individual States were often overlooked. One of the Strategy's core goals was to promote national capacity-building by aligning international assistance with the special needs of individual small island developing States. However, Palau had instead been subjected to a complex arrangement in which remote centres made decisions that failed to address its needs. Moreover, Palau still lacked a United Nations presence on the ground, and had therefore combined with several of its neighbours to create the "UN Presence Initiative" which called for the establishment of a United Nations presence on their territories. Palau had therefore been pleased to learn that the United Nations planned to expand its presence in the region, and looked forward to the timely fulfilment of that commitment.

83. **Mr. Manor** (Israel) said that Israel's approach to the implementation of sustainable development focused on actions that promoted change rather than relying on traditional mechanisms. Agents for change were empowered within the Government, and emphasis was placed on actions and achievements which would ultimately be integrated into mainstream policies and produce new procedures and regulations.

84. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction aimed to build disaster-resilient communities by promoting increased awareness of the importance of disaster reduction as an integral component of sustainable development. Public awareness could be achieved only through education and training, as well as through the production of compelling evidence, for example regarding long-term weather and climate

trends. Israel was among the leading States in the Middle East region in gathering such data, notably through the GLOWA Jordan River project and a project to monitor the deformations of the Earth's crust. If more countries in the region would participate in those projects, awareness would be raised even further.

85. Disaster reduction was achieved by setting standards that would reduce the effects of a disaster, such as an earthquake, and by building the capacity to reduce loss of life if a disaster occurred. Israel had been developing risk-reduction standards based on European and American standards, notably to address the two main risks to the region: earthquakes and water shortages. It had also developed civilian commercial satellites which could provide near real-time information about the magnitude of a disaster anywhere in the world.

86. Israel welcomed the opportunity to engage in discussions on the first review process of the Kyoto Protocol at the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to be held in Nairobi in November 2006. The sharing of information regarding the preparatory work being carried out might be beneficial. An urgent response was required to meet the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as it was clear that increased reductions of greenhouse gas emissions were necessary in order to halt global warming.

87. It was the responsibility of all parties to the Kyoto Protocol to help reduce those emissions. Implementation of the Protocol and its mechanisms had produced notable achievements, but those achievements would be in vain if further commitment periods were not within the framework of the Protocol. A committee should be established to conduct the first review, and should include representatives of developed and developing States Parties. Review criteria should be prepared while taking into account the special circumstances and individual needs of each State Party.

88. The commitments proposed for non-annex I countries should be voluntary, taking into consideration the social, economic and environmental situation of the specific country. Voluntary activities for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions undertaken since 1989 must be acknowledged and recognized within the framework of future commitment periods and taken into account, in a manner agreed in advance by the Parties, as part of the fulfilment of future obligations. Such recognition of voluntary reductions might give States Parties an incentive to take steps beyond their obligations under the Protocol, but the status of voluntary activities in future processes should be guaranteed only when such activities were compatible with the objectives and principles of the Convention and its Protocol.

89. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) said that, if sustainable development was to become a long-term reality, it was necessary to build a truly sustainable economy. Moreover, economies essentially depended on their relationship to nature. Therefore, rather than being regarded as external or marginal to the economy, environmental concerns must be understood by policymakers as the basis on which all economic — even human — activity rested. That was why fulfilment of the commitments made at the 1992 Earth Summit was the very minimum response required of States and all relevant environmental actors.

90. The environmental question was not only an important ethical and scientific problem, but also a political and economic problem and a controversial issue in the process of globalization. Not only should sustainable development be integrated into programmes for poverty reduction and development, but environmental problems should be reflected in security strategies and developmental and humanitarian questions at the national, regional and international levels.

91. His delegation therefore welcomed the progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It appeared that greater emphasis was being placed on renewable energy, fuels and clean technologies and mainstreaming of national sustainable development strategies into policymaking. However, States must do much more to halt and reverse current trends in consumption and pollution. The issues of energy for sustainable development, climate change, industrial development and atmospheric pollution had an obvious environmental impact, with broad implications for national and international security, as well as for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The international community should also continue to deepen its understanding of the

links between peace and human development, above all in the poorest sectors, which had less capacity to adapt.

92. The Holy See also welcomed the momentum achieved in the Marrakesh Process, which would encourage the application of a global and shared long-term energy strategy. In the meantime, serious public investment in clean technology must accompany the use of fossil fuels, as an essential part of national and international strategies to reduce the impact of air and sea transport pollution, as well as those sectors' use of outdated technologies. Governance of water resources must be based on the principle of shared responsibility at the international level, with particular attention to the principle of subsidiarity, which required the participation of local communities in decision-making. The international community must also reverse the alarming phenomenon of desertification, through coordinated responses. Lastly, the rural sector, upon which three quarters of the world depended, was suffering increasing degradation. Policymakers could not continue to treat the rural world as second class.

93. **Mr. Cheok** (Singapore) said that, although some progress had been made in the development of alternative power sources, fossil fuels remained the primary means of power generation. That situation had created problems such as volatile fuel prices, which affected businesses and created uncertainty for all the world's economies. Those concerns were very real for Singapore, as an island State. However, having achieved some success in managing its water resources, it hoped for similar success in its energy and waste-management initiatives.

94. Climate change was a major global environmental challenge, and an area in which Singapore wished to play a major role, as demonstrated by its accession to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. It had a national climate change strategy, as well as a national climate change committee which included representatives of the public and private sectors. Other domestic measures included encouraging citizens to be more energy efficient and to use cleaner, less carbon-intensive fuels and encouraging companies to explore alternative technologies. Market mechanisms such as the clean development mechanism provided for in the Kyoto Protocol offered cost-effective ways to reduce emissions, but they could not be effective without an environment of certainty and stability. The reduction of air pollution was among Singapore's main objectives. Although its overall ambient air quality compared favourably with that of major world cities, the level of fine particulate matter in the air was an emerging problem and had been linked to respiratory and heart disease. The Government was therefore taking steps to encourage a shift from diesel oil to compressed natural gas.

95. Large areas of Southeast Asia, including Singapore, were suffering a severe deterioration in air quality due to the haze caused by illegal forest fires in parts of Sumatra and West Kalimantan in Indonesia. Although Indonesia's President had acknowledged his country's responsibility for the problem, some members of the Indonesian Government and Parliament had taken more short-sighted views. Indonesia should take firm and effective measures to deal with the haze, including introducing more environmentally friendly land-clearance techniques and ratifying the Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Failure to deal effectively with the problem would affect Indonesia's international credibility, as well as its appeal to foreign investors. Singapore and other ASEAN countries had offered to help but international assistance, including from the United Nations, would also be required.

96. Singapore would continue to seek innovative ways to derive clean energy for development, enhance air quality and contribute to climate change initiatives, but the international community as a whole must take concerted action to deal with those concerns. Balancing environmental sustainability and economic development would be one of the major challenges of the twenty-first century.

97. **Ms. Moses** (Nauru) said that the people of Nauru were committed to rebuilding their nation following a century of phosphate mining and placed great hope in the Mauritius Strategy. Nauru had recently conducted an assessment of its national sustainable development strategy and had identified areas where improvements could be made, such as the need for indicators to measure and evaluate its performance and to educate its citizens about sustainable development. Nauru's achievement of sustainability depended on ensuring the proper use of fish stocks and oceans, managing waste, finding cleaner energy sources and rehabilitating land.

98. However, Nauru could not succeed alone. It urgently needed independent, solid expertise from

donor partners to develop and maintain renewable and clean energy sources. For donor countries looking for ways to offset greenhouse gas emissions, Nauru presented an excellent opportunity for real reductions. However, efforts to achieve sustainable development would be in vain if the international community continued to ignore the impact of climate change. Nauru therefore urged the United Nations to accelerate its efforts in that regard by placing the issue at the centre of its agenda.

99. Because of their isolated geographical situation, small island developing States such as Nauru often found themselves isolated from the infrastructure and resources of the United Nations. A number of improvements should therefore be made in the United Nations system. The role of the Alliance of Small Island States in the system should be strengthened through the establishment of a legal structure designed to formalize collaboration and coordination of issues relating to small island developing States, including implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Second, the United Nations presence in smaller Pacific States such as Nauru should be expanded. Third, the Mauritius Strategy should be integrated into the appropriate United Nations human rights and climate change frameworks.

100. Nauru recognized its responsibility to improve its own system of governance, and continued to implement the necessary reforms. However, many of the international commitments aimed at supporting its international development had lacked transparency and had been accompanied by unrealistic demands. The process of accessing funds for development assistance should be simplified and a more independent and transparent analysis provided of what constituted effective development aid. The Mauritius Strategy was one of many useful blueprints for sustainable development, but small island States had seen little if any action since the 2005 Mauritius Summit. There was therefore a need to find better ways to implement the sustainable development agenda, promote action and find more concrete mechanisms for change. Nauru wished to reach the point at which it no longer depended on other nations to administer its energy systems and provide its infrastructure. However, it was still far from achieving such independence, and appealed to the international community to help it rebuild.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.